

SPECIAL REPORT

SUMMARY OF MAIN REPORT: SERIOUS SYMPTOMATIC PROBLEMS IN TODAY'S CHURCHES BASED ON FOUR MAJOR CAUSES WITH THEIR IMPACTS AND INDICATED SOLUTIONS

by

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12-14-2006

Christ-Centered



Biblical Training

1 John 2:6

***the one who says he abides in Him ought himself
to walk in the same manner as He walked.***

John 5:19

***.... "the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is
something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the
Father does, these things the Son also does in like
manner.***

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Scriptures are taken from the New American Standard Bible

REPORT IMPORTANCE: There is a world-wide Church Growth Movement that is leading our churches into a massive falling away from God's best. The falling away is helping to bring the endtimes Tribulation. The Movement targets the youth to bring long-term social change. It works for numbers using a dumbed-down training without also teaching God's Whole Counsel to mature believers in Christ-likeness. Even possibly doing some good things, the Movement is falling away from God's to a human plan. It, itself, attempts to work things together for good instead of only trusting God. The problem is not with what it teaches, but instead, what it leaves out of its teachings, such as true salvation, living under Christ's Lordship, and pursuing maturity in Christ-likeness.

The movement is working (inadvertently?) to bring the world instead of all of God into the Church. It trains people to meet man's felt needs from a human love perspective. This can be good, but it generally omits sufficiently teaching God's program under Christ's Lordship needed to gain the maturity in Christ-likeness that allows us to know and relate to God toward His fullness both now, but especially in eternity. Apart this living with God, there is nothing.

This report describes this movement, its goals and impacts, and why it is happening. It presents what we should do now if we want God's best and to avoid participating unknowingly in this wrong church movement, not gaining the maturity in Christ that He wants us to have. The main report brings an overall understanding. It is a bit long, but stick with it. There are many aspects.

INFORMATION SOURCES: This report uses information taken from: (1) the many referenced publications and (2) my web site detailed reports that develop the teachings from Scripture. These references are listed at the report's end. You are encouraged to read them. We cannot be sure of all the details re the trends because we do not have complete information - such as what individual churches are doing. But observation, the literature, and the internet show clearly the trends are happening. **There are exceptions in many churches to everything we share. Many churches are not so involved, have a mixture, or not involved at all in the trends. They have greater ministry.**

DISCLAIMER: This report presents our biblical view, the current trends and situation, and what God intends for us. You are invited to study on your own to reach your own conclusions and pray for what God would have you to do. We cannot be responsible for what you do or do not do. We, from our love, have attempted to point the pathway to have God's intended best and avoid heading in wrong directions. This report is meant to come along side and bring added value. ***None of us have complete information, so we can have some doctrines that may be incorrect or incomplete. The endtimes can come in ways that none of us understand.***



Matthew 6:33; 1 John 2:6;
2 Chronicles 16:9

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN REPORT: Serious Symptomatic Problems in Today's Churches Based on Four Major Causes With Their Impacts and Indicated Solutions

John M. Stephenson
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December 14, 2006

THE EXPANDING CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT ●1

(What is happening, what is causing it, where is it leading, and what we should do now.)

REPORT PURPOSE: *Our purpose is to acquaint readers with the world-wide Church Growth Movement with its trends, impacts and characteristics of abandoning God's best.* It is to encourage believers to leave the Movement, not join the Movement, and not use its characteristics. Our purpose is to encourage churches to mature their people, especially their children and youth, in Christ-likeness and train to do area-wide evangelism. It is to warn that the Movement's falling away can be helping to bring the coming endtimes Tribulation. The movement is bringing a famine of God's Word that He brings with His Judgment. It is not enduring sound doctrine. ●2

THE MOVEMENT SITUATION: **There is a missions-driven world-wide Church Growth Movement composed of seeker friendly, emerging, and other churches.** Even wanting to do right, the Movement is, in our view, leading thousands of American and world churches into a major falling away from God's best and eternal plan into humanism and semi-apostasy. ●3

The Movement is targeting the youth for salvation (are the youth truly being saved?) and to meet their felt needs by man's methods. It appears to be a more self than God centered, not adequately

1. **DETAILED BACKGROUND AND UNDERSTANDING:** See the latest DVD by Dr. Robert Klenck: *Diaphrax and the Church Manipulating the Church into Globalism*, and also the video by Dean Gotcher: *What is 'Diaphrax*, both of The Institution of Authority Research ([www. AuthorityResearch.com](http://www.AuthorityResearch.com)) in order to understand and know the details of the Church Growth Movement. They show what and why it is happening, and who is behind it. Dr. Klenck identifies Rick Warren and Bill Hybels and their churches, specifically, are promoting and leading this movement. ***It is a most serious situation in the life and ministry of the endtimes Church.*** We also have many references that: (1) show clearly and why the Church's Rapture will come Post-Tribulation at our Lord's Second Coming, and (2) describe why loud dominate beat rock music should never be used in our churches. ***Our goal is to understand and present the movement's impacts and why it is happening. We leave it to others to determine the movement's details.***

2. **ENCOURAGEMENT:** Believers are encouraged to become involved in a church doing much more of God' will. One that uses the hymns and like music, but does not use loud dominate syncopated beat rock music. Contemporary music may be okay if the melody and harmony are dominate over the rhythm and many repetitive verses are not used. One that encourages establishing home teaching and support groups that train with that presented later. One that especially is doing area-wide evangelism and works to mature their people, including their children and youth, in Christ-likeness.

3. **OVERT MOVEMENT:** Our churches have always and still have some problems. But the Church Growth Movement is overtly planned and is involving and influencing thousands of churches. It is a massive falling away.

operating under Christ's Lordship. It is bringing them into a human type love fellowship, emphasizing relationships, and worship. It uses the world's rock music, facilitated (non-teaching) home community groups, paraphrased Bible versions, and the world's marketing methods. The home groups mainly operate to gain man's consensus. It is using less than first-level Bible training without also training in depth-breadth. ***Those in the movement believe that this direction and method are the only effective ways to reach today's youth for Christ. Is this true? People around the world are coming to Christ using standard biblical methods. God draws them using His Word.*** The movement is operating world wide to meet people's human needs.

The literature shows that believers have different interpretations as to the degree this movement is of God and whether it is of God. ***The Movement, in its falling away, is a major contributor helping to bring the endtimes Tribulation. Of course immorality also helps. The Church Growth Movement being humanistic in nature is, in our view, not biblical Christianity.***

Using mainly first level training (if that), the movement is characterized by what it leaves out of its teachings and also in its sharing of half truths. There is essentially no attempt to mature their people in Christ's-likeness with a version of God's Whole Counsel. This is sin of omission. The Movement is also characterized by its attempt to work all things together for good by man's ways, instead of trusting God to do so by His ways. Thus, the movement is horizontal in humanism, not vertical in structure being God directed. In our view, this is major sin and can be great apostasy.

The movement is moving away from (ignoring) God's command to become mature in Christ-likeness and to live as Christ lives.●4

Hebrews 6:1 - Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity,

(Thus, we should learn what is needed to mature our people and train them. None of us know sufficiently about all the many aspects required to become greatly mature. But we can begin with what we know and understand. We can help each other and pray for more insights.)

1 John 2:6 - the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

(So we should learn how our Lord walked and train to live that way. Is your church doing this?)

In our view, the Church Growth Movement is doing neither of these. It is not carrying out God's basic Plan. A problem comes when churches believe they are maturing their people, when in reality, they are not. Do they know how, know what Scriptures are needed, and have a commitment to mature their people? They need to train with both what we call the what to's and the how to's. **(Many churches teach what to do, but not how to do what God commands with testimony.)**

Churches are buying into this movement in varying degrees. But most all involved churches have adopted its rock music with it drums and guitars because they believe that the music is amoral (neutral) and necessary to reach today's youth. (But it is not, and drums are not found in the Bible.) In doing so, many are abandoning the hymns, pianos, and organs. They use music teams. Does rock music bring worship to God?

The Movement, as it appears to us, is teaching inadequately to live by sacrificial love, keeping God's commandments to know the heart of God. It is teaching inadequately to live by faith to trust God to

4. **SCRIPTURES: Command to Become Mature in Christ-likeness:** Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 3:19; 4:11-13; Colossians 1:28; Hebrews 6:1; 11:35; James 1:2-4. **Command to live as Christ lives:** 1 John 2:6 with John 5:19-20; 12:49; 14:6-11; 17:4.

act in their lives according to His Plan and promises which allow us to live without sin and to receive new revelation from Him. We need to walk by faith in order to learn the Bible. **Thus, it is moving away from God's major plan for what is now and eternally best for His people, the Church. Thus, even doing some good things from a human perspective, it is a movement working (perhaps inadvertently) to bring the world instead of all of God and His major plan into the Church. Christianity is having all of God in all of man, where God, using His Word, is directing everything.** We would think better of the Movement if it would also use God's Word in more completeness and have additional training (in depth-breadth) that would mature their people in Christ-likeness and involve them in major ministries.

Some churches, not fully joining the Movement, are adding some of the Movement's characteristics. They use accurate first-level sermons, rock music, and the world's advertising. They still have Sunday School, Awana programs, and a Vacation Bible School. Some churches have two different worship services, one with contemporary and one with traditional music. **Not teaching God's Whole Counsel, these churches also do not mature their people. The collection of accurate first-level sermons do not bring maturity, but a plateau of Biblical understanding.** They teach what to do without also teaching *how* we do what God wants. They also do not attempt greatly to evangelize their total local areas. How many water baptisms of new believers have they had of their new people and of those saved from the community? **Can this be a partial falling away?**

DISCERNMENT: *In our view, the people leading and are members of the movement lack spiritual discernment and doctrinal understanding. Is it led of the Holy Spirit?* If they had these, in our view, they would leave the movement, no longer promote it, and not join it. No Church would ever use rock music if they investigated its source, impact, and characteristics. It came from voodooism, paganism, and immorality where it was used to call up demons and evil spirits. It desensitizes the spiritual and biblical intellectual perception●5 and encourages immorality. **These comments lead us to believe that the Movement is not as much of God as many believe.** Are many people really being saved in the Movement?

We should go with the great hymns that have the melody and harmony dominate over the rhythm that brings great spiritual inspirational worship of God. (There is some hymn music that has been used in beer taverns, but this is not voodooism or calling up demons.) We should choose the best hymns for great worship to God. Those that inspire the believers' spirit, mind, and heart.●6

FORFEITURE: *Those people in and/or associated with the Movement are forfeiting having God's best and most of what God has planned for His people. Not becoming greatly mature and being in ministry, they will glorify God less, will send ahead less spiritual wealth, and will not receive as many heavenly rewards that God wants to give. They will forfeit much of God's leading and guiding their lives, living by faith for God to act greater in their lives, and living by sacrificial love needed to know God and to live holy.*

But most of all, they will most likely forfeit or impede, both now, but especially in eternity, relating and knowing God toward His fullest in depth-breadth to live holy and righteous lives in a close fellowship with Him. Apart from this relationship there is nothing.

The above is what God has planned for His people. The Church Growth Movement is omitting God's basic and needed Plan for now, but especially that needed for eternity. Is this not a

5. **INTELLIGENCE:** Tests show that many times people training under music that has the melody dominate have greater intelligence. Such was the case with Einstein.

6. **GOOD MUSIC:** Professional musicians tell us that good music has the melody dominate, the harmony next, and the rhythm under control. Would not God use good music, regardless of the instruments used? Of course the music varies with the culture.

most terrible Movement? We are talking about eternity here. And Church and Christian family leadership is causing or allowing this forfeiture to occur! Do they face God's judgment?

TRENDS: For churches involved in the Movement or using its characteristics, the trends signal the church is becoming immature with a loss of biblical intellect and with a plateau of Bible knowledge. There are exceptions, but in time, few will know and be able to teach the Bible in depth-breadth and how the endtimes will come. With a dumbing down of the training, new people, after a period of time, will have no additional learning for which to look forward. Their Christian growth and maturity can plateau, unless they study on their own. This is what I am doing. (I ask Christian youth several basic Bible doctrinal questions and they cannot answer any of them. Are any of our churches teaching adequate doctrine?)

As an adjunct, large numbers of our public high schools are also dumbing down where our youth are getting a very poor, but guided, education. Graduates can hardly read or write. Many are dropping out without graduating. ***As an overall result, both our church and public youth are growing up without ability to do critical analysis.*** Of course there will be exceptions where our young people attended Christian schools, were home schooled, perhaps attended a good public high school, or worked greatly on their own regardless of the school training.

The trends of this falling away are taking us to world government and world religion. Our youth, now both young and grown adults, are being set up to conform to the world government without being able to determine what is happening, where it is going, and why. Christians, not well grounded, can fall away from the faith under the coming satanic indoctrination and persecution. The Church Growth Movement is preparing its youth for more (a massive) falling away in this period. So even though those involved in the Church Growth Movement want to do right, there are eternal, satanic strategy and endtimes impacts.

SATANIC STRATEGY: By observation, Satan is using the dialectic process. In this process, he is using the Church Growth Movement as a method (anti-thesis) to take the long-term institutional Church from where it is (thesis) to where he wants it to become in the long-term as the liberal apostate unbelieving church (synthesis). He is doing this to cause the church to fall away so that he can bring a calamity to establish world government over which he and his man will rule with the world (unknowingly) worshiping him. With this strategy and with many fewer Christians in ministry, he plans to help prevent some of God's elect from believing the Gospel and from accomplishing some of God's chosen work. If he is successful, he will win the spiritual warfare over Christ. (Of course this cannot happen. Only the most righteous and holy Christ can win.)

CAUSES: The direction and practices of the current Church Growth Movement, and those churches adopting some of its characteristics, are, in our view, symptomatic of at least four causes. These are in addition to our churches lacking maturity, discernment, and adequate Bible knowledge and doctrine. These causes are that our churches are:

(1) not appreciating God's Greatness such that they search the Bible and do **ALL** they can find for what God wants done and to the degree He wants it done - knowing that our perfect God would put in His Bible all that we need for direction;

(2) not seeing God's requirement of maturing His people in Christ-likeness that is needed for eternity such that they use less than first-level training and mainly from humanism. They are working with the lost and new people in a much higher priority than they are maturing and working with their own gung ho and very faithful people, leaving none to be matured;

(3) not realizing they are implementing satanic strategy by dumbing down and helping to bring the endtimes Tribulation; and

(4) not doing adequate critical analysis to determine how well they are actually doing evangelism and

maturing their people; are not knowing and recognizing the signs that signal the endtimes Tribulation can come any time.

The situation is very frustrated by our church people believing differently: (1) as to when the Rapture will come before or after the endtimes Tribulation; (2) as to whether or not there is an endtimes Tribulation; (3) as to whether the world will be Christianized or be in complete apostasy when Christ comes; (4) about whether or not all music is amoral or neutral for its use in churches and whether or not rock music has terrible impacts on our church people personally and in their worship; and (5) the need to be highly mature in Christ living under His Lordship both now and especially at the time of death - our spiritual maturity may be fixed forever at the time of death.

The situation is frustrated also by our churches being more procedurally than outcome oriented. They work to do some evangelism, but not to work with other churches to evangelize complete local areas, particularly that of the children. They work for spiritual growth toward making disciples of Christ, but not to mature their people in Christ-likeness, the highest level they understand. They do not have a God's Whole Counsel curriculum that can bring the maximum maturity they understand.

LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF THE MOVEMENT:

● The movement, not enduring sound doctrine, is bringing a famine of God's Word, omitting much from being taught. In practice, this is a subtraction of God's Word that the Bible warns that we must not do. **The movement is forfeiting having God's best.**

● As stated, from a long-term dumbing down to teaching mainly first level, the Church is becoming immature with a loss of biblical intellect. Her biblical knowledge is plateauing.

● There will be very few mature in Christ to teach the Bible, to handle the coming endtimes situation, and be able to know and relate to God in His desired depth-breadth in eternity. The numbers of the gung ho and the very faithful are decreasing.

● ***The most serious impact is that those with less maturity in Christ-likeness, not now living sufficiently as Christ lives, will get to know and be used of God less per unit time in eternity. God reveals Himself as we walk by faith. There are many maturity levels of walking by faith and by love. In time, if there is time in eternity, those with the greater maturity will very likely know MUCH MORE about God as eternity progresses.*** We should pursue maturity because God commands that we do. He may use it in a different way in eternity than we can know now. It is, of course, needed now to do more of His work and to glorify God much more greatly.

● The understanding of the above is most serious. This means that very few (now grown-up youth) now and in the future, if any, will ever again know the Bible in its depth-breadth as the endtimes unfold to Christ's Coming. Only those few who currently have a strong commitment to Christ will gain more maturity during the endtimes. ***We are heading into a period of extreme spiritual darkness - an absence of knowing God's Word. Is not Church and family leadership responsible? Is not judgment coming?***

● As thousands of churches now are joining this Movement or using some of its characteristics, the situation is leading to a major falling away of the Church from obedience which will most likely cause God to bring the endtimes Tribulation. Rock music desensitizes the learning of Scripture.

● God will use the endtimes Tribulation to formally polarize the world's people in their acceptance or denial of the Gospel so that He can bring our Lord's Second Coming with the Rapture and history's termination. The Rapture can only come after all people have made formal decisions.

● As stated, Satan is using the situation to set up world government over which he and his man will rule. He attempts to keep people from believing and accomplishing God's work.

Even though the churches in the Movement are not doing His best, God may be using the situation to save many that may not be saved by any other way and give them at least a minimal maturity for eternity.

WHAT WE SHOULD DO NOW: Wanting God's best, we should avoid joining, and we should come out of the Church Growth Movement. We should go to a Church and/or home group (and do it on our own if necessary) that is attempting to obey God in all things, becoming mature in Christ-likeness, doing evangelism, and avoiding rock-type music. We should now train and equip our children and youth with maturity and for how the endtimes will come using a version of God's Whole Counsel. We should train how to live by strong faith and by sacrificial love. We should go to small home teaching groups and put in some provisions to get through the coming calamity that will bring world government and the Tribulation. ***Warning: Train and prepare with some urgency because the signs signal the Tribulation can come any time. Do not be caught unprepared and blind-sided. Only God knows the time. Pray for the blessing of adequate time to train our youth.***

TRAINING: We should train our Church people, including particularly our children and youth, to become mature in Christ - live Christ-like.●7 The method is to train in depth-breadth, academically and practically, with on-the-job training in the Church and in families to:

(1) **WORSHIP:** worship, glorify, obey, please, and honor God;

(2) **LIVE GODLY:** live godly lives patterned after the Son's walk with the Father by love and by faith - with every thought and action coming from God the Father as a source;

(3) **ACCOMPLISH GOD'S WORK:** help accomplish God's work of evangelizing the world including area-wide local areas, discipling believers to maturity in Christ, planting churches, building godly families, and reaching out to the needy;

(4) **STAND STRONG ON DOCTRINE:** learn and stand strong, on our basic Christian-Faith Doctrines (the ones for which we are willing to die), without falling away. The training should include what to do and not do as the underground Church in the Tribulation and in prison.

The major topics or courses, in our view, to begin this training should include at least the following taught in depth-breadth both academically and practically (more topics can be added afterward such as A Harmony of the Gospels and many New Testament Epistles.):

1. **The Christian-Faith Doctrines with God's Attributes and Character Qualities - His Greatness.** (See our web site doctrinal statements for doctrinal examples and paper on God's Attributes.)

2. **Christian-Life Relationship Principles** (This consists of the above suggested training of worship, live godly, and accomplish ministry. See appendix for list of topics. Each topic has depth-breadth.)

3. **God's Plan for History with the Spiritual Warfare and Endtimes Prophecy:** God planned the events of history using spiritual warfare to bring responding people to maturity in Christ so that they could know and relate to Him toward His fullest in eternity. Endtimes prophecy is how God plans to end history. One should know what will happen in the endtimes Tribulation regardless of one's prophetic view and that our maturity may be fixed forever at death. See my web site documents.

MAIN REPORT: Now please read the main report on our web site for much depth-breadth to gain a more complete understanding. The movement is leading us down Satan's garden path. We do not want to inadvertently and/or unknowingly be part of this Movement or use its

7. **MEASURE OF MATURITY:** The measure of our spiritual maturity can only be done by God. It is measured by how we respond to God in every aspect of life in comparison to how Christ, being perfect, would respond if He were to act in our place. Our Lord alone is our role model.

characteristics, as churches are doing. We need to seek, know, and implement God's best for now and especially in eternity. We need urgently to train our children and youth.